

July 5, 2020

FAQs: Health, Safety and Travel during COVID-19 Response in Guatemala

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1. General Information about the situation in Guatemala during the COVID-19 crisis

What restrictions are currently in place in Guatemala in response to COVID-19?

Recently the Guatemalan government declared a State of Calamity to expand measures aimed at protecting the health and safety of all persons in Guatemala, including U.S. citizens. There is also a State of Siege in three Sololá Municipalities.

State of Calamity (*Estado de calamidad*)

The Guatemalan government declared a “state of calamity” on March 5 and then extended the expiration of this declaration to August 5. Declaring a “state of calamity” allows the Guatemalan government to take exceptional measures to protect national security (similar to a “state of emergency” in the United States). Under a state of calamity, the Guatemalan government can authorize specific actions, such as border closures and curfew (explained below). For updates related to the state of calamity, we refer you to the Guatemalan government:

<https://twitter.com/GuatemalaGob>

State of Siege (*Estado de sitio*) in three Solola Municipalities:

Guatemalan President Giammattei declared on Saturday, May 30, a state of siege to be in place in the municipalities of Nahualá, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán and Santa Lucía Utatlán for 30 days. This state of siege has been extended to July 30. The President stated that these three municipalities had “undertaken a series of actions which affected the order, governability, and security of their inhabitants.” The state of siege limits the rights to demonstrate, participate in any type of meetings, gun possession, and the freedom of movement.

All U.S. citizens in Guatemala are expected to obey the official policies of the Guatemalan government. Several of the official measures implemented by the Guatemalan government that impact U.S. citizens currently in Guatemala are explained here and will be valid until further notice:

- 1. Closing of borders (*Cierre de fronteras*)**
- 2. National curfew (*Toque de queda*)**
- 3. Prohibition of Inter-Departamental Travel**
- 4. Mandatory Mask and Social Distancing**
- 5. Closure of Beaches, Lakes and Rivers**
- 6. Additional Department and Municipality Level Restrictions**
- 7. Prohibitions on Alcohol**
- 8. Restrictions on Vehicular Mobility**

1. Closing of Borders (Cierre de fronteras)

The Guatemalan government is currently barring entry to most non-Guatemalans (with specific exceptions for accredited diplomatic personnel, health and security personnel, and exceptional cases as designated by the Guatemalan government) – by its land, sea, and air borders. Airport operations and routine commercial flights out of Guatemala have been suspended. The U.S. Embassy continues to work with the Guatemalan government to permit departure of certain flights for U.S. citizens and others from Guatemalan airspace to the United States. The Guatemalan government can adjust its policy on national border closings at any time. We refer you to the Guatemalan Immigration Office for updated information on national borders:

<https://twitter.com/MigracionGuate>

For information on land travel restrictions, see the question below titled “Can I Travel by Land in Guatemala?”.

2. National Curfew (*Toque de queda*)

Guatemala’s NATIONAL mandatory curfew will remain in place from 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 29, to 5:00 a.m. on Monday, July 13. The curfew runs from 6:00 p.m. each evening through 5:00 a.m. the following day. In addition, a 24-hour curfew has been instituted for Sunday, July 5, and Sunday, July 12. All persons are required to stay in their residences from 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, to 5:00 a.m. on Monday, July 6; and from 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 11, to 5:00 a.m. on Monday, July 13. Every individual in Guatemala — including U.S. citizens — is required to remain inside their domicile during curfew hours (with exceptions for health and security, restaurant delivery services, certain media and legal personnel in pursuit of their duties, and patients receiving urgent treatment for chronic conditions).

Operating Hours for Essential Businesses: Supermarkets, grocers, and other markets are permitted to operate from 5:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Banks and financial institutions are permitted to operate on Monday through Sunday, from 5:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Agricultural and ranching activities, transportation of humanitarian aid, and hotel hospitality services are permitted during these hours as well. Restaurants are permitted to provide food for takeout each day from 6:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Food delivery hours are not restricted. Other commercial activities are permitted from 6:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m., provided the business ensures appropriate sanitary and social distancing measures are in place.

The Embassy advises U.S. citizens that the government of Guatemala may re-institute a complete closure of the country, or apply other restrictions to travel and other activities, at any time. U.S. citizens in Guatemala are expected to obey the curfew, which is being enforced by Guatemalan law enforcement. Violators of the curfew restrictions risk arrest. More information at the webpage of the Ministry of Governance: <https://mingob.gob.gt/pnc-continua-deteniendo-a-personas-que-incumplen-el-toque-de-queda/>

3. Prohibition of Inter-Departmental travel

All travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango is prohibited. The Embassy is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

See the question titled, “Can I Travel by Land in Guatemala?” in this document for information on traveling to the airport for ticketed flights.

4. Mandatory Mask and Social Distancing

All individuals must wear masks in public spaces, including in grocery stores and on the street, to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in fines of up to Q150,000.

The Government of Guatemala imposed additional social distancing restrictions:

- Everyone is required to maintain a 4.5 ft distance from each other in public spaces.
- Public religious gatherings and celebrations of any size are prohibited.
- Visits to individuals in hospitals or prisons are prohibited.
- In-person academic activities at all levels are suspended.

5. Closure of Beaches, Lakes, and Rivers

On April 2, the Government of Guatemala announced that all visits to beaches, lakes and rivers in the country are prohibited. Closures apply 24 hours a day and are not limited to curfew hours. This restriction is currently in place until further notice.

6. Additional Department and Municipality-Level Restrictions

Beyond the national-level restrictions mentioned above, different municipalities within the country may adopt additional restrictive measures on travel and outdoor activities. Please monitor local news reports to receive the latest information. American Citizens in need of immediate assistance should contact the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT)’s Tourist Assistance Program (PROATUR) through its website <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/es/noticias.php> or by dialing 1500.

For more information on the guidelines provided by the Government of Guatemala visit: <https://legal.dca.gob.gt/>

Ministry of Governance: <https://mingob.gob.gt/> and <https://www.facebook.com/mingobguate/>

U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19-2/>

7. Prohibitions on Alcohol

The sale and purchase of alcohol is permitted between only during limited hours. Consumption of alcohol in public areas is prohibited.

8. Restrictions on Vehicular Mobility

All personal vehicles with license plates that end in an odd number (for example P001AAA) can circulate Monday, June 29; Wednesday, July 1; Friday, July 3; Tuesday, July 7; and Thursday, July 9; and Saturday, July 11.

All personal vehicles with license plates that end in an even number (for example P002AAA) can circulate on Tuesday, June 30; Thursday, July 2; Saturday, July 4; Monday, July 6; Wednesday, July 8; and Friday, July 10.

Motorcycles, pedestrians, and other modes of non-vehicular transportation are exempt from these restrictions.

All private vehicular mobility will be restricted on Sunday, July 5, and Sunday, July 12.

In short, for the next two weeks: personal vehicles with a plate ending in an odd number can drive on odd numbered dates, and personal vehicles with a plate ending in an even number can drive on even numbered dates, except for Sundays which are a complete lockdown.

Are all borders and airports closed in Guatemala?

Starting March 5, the Government of Guatemala began taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by restricting travel to and from Guatemala. As of March 17, regular commercial flights were suspended. The Guatemalan government may reassess this decision at any time. Most land borders are also closed but only Guatemalan authorities can provide the latest information.

The Guatemalan government is currently barring entry to most non-Guatemalans (with specific exceptions for accredited diplomatic personnel, health and security personnel, and exceptional cases as designated by the Guatemalan government) – by its land, sea, and air borders. Airport operations and routine commercial flights out of Guatemala have been suspended. The U.S. Embassy continues to work with Guatemalan authorities to allow passengers manifested on outgoing commercial flights to travel to the airport in Guatemala City. These passengers will receive letters requesting safe passage from their commercial carrier.

The Government of Guatemala is the authority that determines entry and exit from the country. We refer you to the links below for the most recent information.

Guatemalan Immigration Office (Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración): <http://igm.gob.gt/>
Government of Guatemala: <https://www.guatemala.gob.gt/>
U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19-2/>

See Section 2 of this document for guidance on travel options for departing Guatemala.

Can I travel by land within Guatemala?

All travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango is prohibited. The Embassy is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

Public transportation within Guatemala is suspended.

For specific questions about safety and viability of land travel, contact the Guatemalan Agency for Tourist Assistance (PROATUR): <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/safety-tips.php?lang=EN> or dial (502) 2421 2810.

There are reports that some local Guatemalan communities are taking unofficial action to restrict individuals from entering or exiting their communities in an attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, non-Guatemalan citizens have been prevented from entering or leaving a community — or upon leaving, are not allowed to return. Several reports in this regard have come from communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. If any U.S. citizen feels they are in danger, they should call Guatemalan law enforcement at 120, 122, or 123 (the equivalent of “911” in the United States) and the U.S. Embassy (502) 2326 4000 to report the situation. For more information and updates, please call the Guatemalan tourism police at 1500 or visit the Guatemalan Tourist Authority: <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/safety-tips.php?lang=EN>

Can I travel by air within Guatemala?

You can find information about domestic flight availability and airports through the Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation (DGAC) at <http://www.dgac.gob.gt/index.php>.

All travel must take place outside of curfew hours. All travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango is prohibited.

Where can I find information about international flights to/from Guatemala?

Although international flights are currently not operating normally, information can be found at the Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation (DGAC) at <http://www.dgac.gob.gt/index.php>. Interested travelers should also contact airlines directly and check their websites for flight information.

In addition to its ongoing flights to the George Bush Intercontinental/Houston Airport (IAH), United Airlines has opened additional July U.S.-bound flights with destinations of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD), and Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR).

Passengers seeking tickets or information for these flights and passengers seeking assistance with inquiries related to cancelled flights should reach out to the airline directly at <https://www.united.com> or VentasGUA@united.com. The Embassy will continue to work with the airline to provide letters requesting permission for inter-departmental travel to the airport. Passengers will receive these waivers from the airline upon ticket purchase.

At present, all travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango is prohibited. The Embassy is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis. As in previous weeks, the Embassy will continue to advocate with Guatemalan authorities to allow ticketed passengers on these flights to travel to Guatemala City, for the sole purpose of traveling to the airport and boarding an outgoing flight to the United States. As in previous weeks, the airline will provide this letter directly to ticketed passengers.

Please note that the Embassy has requested facilitation of inter-departmental travel only for ticketed passengers on Guatemala-United States air flights, and only for the purpose of reaching La Aurora International Airport. Guatemalan authorities may request to view travelers' flight tickets and itinerary, to confirm the legitimacy of their travel purpose.

The Embassy has not issued any document to facilitate travel through Guatemala's international land borders and advises U.S. citizens that alterations of the Embassy's original travel letter for use in purposes other than reaching La Aurora International Airport may be punishable to the full extent of Guatemalan law.

Should I try to cross into Mexico and fly to U.S. from there?

The Guatemalan government is currently allowing foreign travelers to exit via land border crossing into Mexico, and Mexico is currently allowing them to enter, but this could change at any time. In addition, all travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango is prohibited. The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

The U.S. Embassy does not recommend this option as it is not guaranteed that traveling by land out of Guatemala will result in successful return to the United States, or that it is safe to do so. For the past year Embassy personnel have not been allowed to conduct personal travel in Huehuetenango or San Marcos (where the Tecún Umán border crossing is located) due to security concerns. Additionally, given the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, border passage and flight availability in Mexico could change at any time. All travelers considering

exiting Guatemala by land should research travel and security advisories (available at www.travel.state.gov) for all portions of their planned route, as well as the CDC's COVID-19 country health guides (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>).

U.S. Embassy in Mexico

Website: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/mexico.usembassy>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/USEmbassyMex>

Where can I find all alerts published by the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala related to the COVID-19 crisis?

U.S. Embassy in Guatemala

Website: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala>

Where can I find health information about COVID-19?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Guatemalan Ministry of Health: <https://www.mspas.gob.gt/>

Public hospitals in Guatemala: <https://www.mspas.gob.gt/index.php/servicios/webs-de-hospitals>

General information on medical assistance: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/doctors/>

What should I do if my 90-day authorization (tourist visa) to remain in Guatemala expired?

The Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración (Guatemalan immigration office) announced on April 6, 2020 that non-Guatemalans who entered Guatemala legally using a tourist visa, but who are unable to depart due to the travel restrictions put in place by the Guatemalan government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be allowed to remain in Guatemala in legal status until the travel restrictions are lifted, even if their 90-day authorization to remain in Guatemala has lapsed at that time.

Non-Guatemalans whose 90-day status lapsed before March 5, 2020 and who are unlawfully present in Guatemala must be processed at the Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración in Guatemala City to resolve their status. Please note that the public sector labor is suspended with

the exceptions for certain essential government and health personnel. Any in person process with the Immigration Office must be done in compliance with the curfew hours.

For additional information, please contact the Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración at (502) 2411-2411. Refer to the Acuerdo de Autoridad Migratoria Nacional No. 3-2018 which provides a complete fee schedule.

See message posted by U.S. Embassy Guatemala on April 6:

<https://gt.usembassy.gov/information-for-u-s-citizens-in-guatemala-regarding-visa-status/>

If I go back to the U.S. will I be quarantined?

Visit the Department of Homeland Security (<https://www.dhs.gov/>) and Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/>) for the latest information for individuals entering the United States.

2. Air travel options not coordinated by the Department of State

The United States Embassy in Guatemala wishes to inform all U.S. citizens that In addition to its ongoing flights to the George Bush Intercontinental/Houston Airport (IAH), United Airlines has opened additional July U.S.-bound flights with destinations of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD), and Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR).

Passengers seeking tickets or information for these flights and passengers seeking assistance with inquiries related to cancelled flights, should reach out to the airline directly at <https://www.united.com> or VentasGUA@united.com.

At present, all travel to and from the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Sacatepequez, and Quetzaltenango. The Embassy is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis. As in previous weeks, the Embassy will continue to advocate with Guatemalan authorities to allow ticketed passengers on these flights to travel to Guatemala City, for the sole purpose of traveling to the airport and boarding an outgoing flight to the United States. As in previous weeks, the airline will provide this letter directly to ticketed passengers.

Please note that the Embassy has requested facilitation of inter-departmental travel **only** for ticketed passengers on Guatemala-United States air flights, and **only** for the purpose of reaching La Aurora International Airport. Guatemalan authorities may request to view travelers' flight tickets and itinerary, to confirm the legitimacy of their travel purpose.

The Embassy has not issued any document to facilitate travel through Guatemala's international land borders and advises U.S. citizens that alterations of the Embassy's original travel letter for use in purposes other than reaching La Aurora International Airport may be punishable to the full extent of Guatemalan law.

Please note, prices are set by the carriers, not the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Embassy would like to emphasize Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent message to U.S. citizens currently outside the United States:

"We do not know in some countries how long the continued commercial flights in your country may continue to operate. We can't guarantee the U.S. Government's ability to arrange chartered flights indefinitely..."

"Americans abroad who wish to return home [to the United States] should do so immediately and make arrangements to accomplish that."

Please continue to monitor U.S. Embassy online accounts for updated information:

U.S. Embassy in Guatemala

Website: <https://gt.usembassy.gov>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala>

Please contact AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov for any urgent inquiries.

3. Charter flights organized by the Department of State

Is the U.S. Embassy organizing charter flights for U.S. citizens?

The last scheduled State Department-coordinated charter flights from Guatemala City to Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) departed on March 31. From March 23-31, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala coordinated 12 charter flights, from La Aurora Airport to Dallas-Fort Worth, evacuating 1,900 U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. **At this time, we do not expect additional State Department charter flights will be made available.**

We urge U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to return to the United States to continue to check the availability of commercial flights and contact airlines directly to make a booking. See Section 2 of this document.

As we do not anticipate additional State Department charter flights will be available, we have closed the Embassy's online data entry form and will not be taking additional registrations. Information already collected by the Embassy will not be retained. For any possible U.S.

Government-coordinated flights in the future, the U.S. Embassy will provide instructions regarding its registration process at that time. However, as we do not anticipate that this will likely become an option, we urge travelers to continue to seek commercial flight options from Guatemala City to the United States.

U.S. Embassy Guatemala alerts for U.S. citizens related to COVID-19:

<https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Should I try to book a flight on a non-U.S. Government charter flight?

Yes. [See Section 2 of this document.](#)

How will the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala communicate with me?

U.S. Embassy email addresses end in “[@state.gov](#).”

Please contact AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov for any urgent inquiries.

4. Information for U.S. citizens seeking routine Consular services at the U.S. Embassy

How have COVID-19 restrictions affected Consular services?

As a reminder, due to COVID-19-related health and safety measures, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City has suspended all routine consular services for U.S. citizens as of Monday, June 22, and continuing until further notice.

While this suspension is in effect, the Embassy will provide passport services on an emergency basis only. U.S. citizens with expired or soon-to-expire passports who have imminent travel plans to the United States may request an emergency appointment at the Embassy through the email address listed below.

The Embassy continues to accept adult passport renewal applications by mail. For more information on this process, please [click here](#).

Due to reduced operations at U.S. domestic facilities, U.S. citizens who have previously applied for routine passport or Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) services may expect delays in receiving their documents. Applicants with documents in transit who have imminent travel plans to the United States may apply for emergency passports by scheduling an emergency appointment through the email address listed below. As a reminder, U.S. citizen children do not require a CRBA to qualify for an emergency passport.

To schedule an emergency appointment, you can email amcitsguatemala@state.gov.

5. Resources

Where can I get more information?

Embassy website: <https://gt.usembassy.gov>.

Covid-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala>

Phone: (502) 2326 4000

American Citizens email: Amcitsguatemala@state.gov

State Department's Global Level 4 Health Travel Advisory: www.travel.state.gov.

What the Department of State can and cannot do during a crisis:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/what-state-dept-can-cant-do-crisis.html>

Consult the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/>)website for the most up-to-date information. For the most recent information on what you can do to reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 please see the CDC's latest recommendations at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fprevention.html

Visit the COVID-19 crisis page on travel.state.gov for the latest information:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

Check with your airlines, cruise lines, or travel operators regarding any updated information about your travel plans and/or restrictions.

Visit the Department of Homeland Security (<https://www.dhs.gov/>) on the latest travel restrictions to the U.S.

Monitor local news for updates.

Where do I find information published by the Government of Guatemala?

Guatemalan Government (Information in Spanish)

Website: <https://www.guatemala.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/guatemalagob/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GuatemalaGob>

PROATUR (Tourist Assistance Program) (information in English)

Part of the Guatemalan Official Tourism Agency **INGUAT**

Phone: 1500 / 2421-2810

Website: <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/about-proatur.php>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitGuatemala>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/visitguatemala>

INGUAT (Official Tourism Agency) (information in Spanish)

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Website: <http://inguat.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/inguat/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/InguatPrensa>

Ministry of Government

Website: <https://mingob.gob.gt/>

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mingobguate/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mingobguate>